



# **NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM** FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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## OVERVIEW

1 January – 31 December 2018

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Statistics on the Assistance system for the year 2018

The police are no longer automatically notified of clients

A call coming into the information hotline puts several wheels in motion



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# FOREWORD



## Human trafficking in conflict zones

A record number of new clients were accepted into the Assistance system in 2018. The high number of clients is partly due to the surge in immigration in 2015 as well as the increasing understanding and awareness of human trafficking. Awareness has been raised, among other means, by training pre-trial investigation authorities through the IHME project.

Many of the clients who have been victims of human trafficking outside Finland have been exploited in conflict zones, such as Libya, Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan. This finding is consistent with the report on human trafficking released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 7 January 2019. The report states that armed conflict increases the risk of human trafficking.

## Sex trade in Finland

Approximately 50 victims of human trafficking who are suspected of having been victims of human trafficking in Finland are referred to the Assistance system every year. Many of these clients have been victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation.

However, the biggest group among clients who had been victims of human trafficking in Finland in 2018 were victims of human trafficking involving sexual exploitation, most commonly women forced or pressured into prostitution in Finland. More than twice as many victims of this kind were identified in 2018 than during the previous year.

## More and more victims seek help by themselves

Another notable change in 2018 was an increase in the number of victims who sought help by themselves or with the support of an ordinary citizen. Efforts have been made to improve the opportunities of victims of human trafficking to reach the parties that can help by updating the ihmiskauppa.fi website.

More detailed statistics on individuals referred to the Assistance system in 2018 start on page 8.

The Assistance system adopted a new policy in November 2018, according to which the police are no longer notified of victims of human trafficking who are accepted as clients. More information on the policy and the reasons behind it can be found on page 14.

This review's special feature focuses on the Assistance system's information hotline. The information hotline is open round the clock, every day of the week. Find out on page 4 what the calls usually concern and what happens when a call comes into the information hotline.

# THE INFORMATION HOTLINE

IN  
ACTION

THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM'S INFORMATION HOTLINE RECEIVES BETWEEN FIVE AND 25 CALLS PER WEEK. THE CALLER CAN BE A PUBLIC OFFICIAL, A CONCERNED CITIZEN, A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN ORGANISATION, A LAWYER, OR AN INDIVIDUAL IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE FOR HIM/HERSELF. THE CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT LOGGED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED BY THE CALLER.

WHEN A CALL COMES INTO THE INFORMATION HOTLINE, THE OPERATOR MUST EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF CLIENTS AND CALLERS, THE SITUATIONS DESCRIBED BELOW ARE FICTITIOUS BUT BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS.

## MONDAY

**12.22 pm.** A call comes in from a shelter in northern Finland. A 19-year-old woman who has been beaten up by her husband had arrived at the shelter two weeks previously. The woman is accompanied by her two under school-age children. According to the caller, the woman appears extremely trauma-

tised, is jumpy and seems distracted at times. As the woman has slowly been drawn into conversations, she has revealed that she was married off to her husband when she was just 14 years old.

The woman has said that she has been raped and beaten throughout her marriage and that she has not been allowed to leave the house without super-

vision. Both the woman's own family and her husband's family have threatened to kill the woman, as she has run away from her husband. The caller asks what she could do to help the woman and whether the woman could potentially become a client of the assistance system. Arrangements are made for a social instructor from the assistance system's offices in Oulu to

go to the shelter to see the woman the following day. The social instructor will tell the woman about her rights and the assistance that can be offered to her.

**2.45 pm.** A church employee calls the hotline. He has encountered an individual through the church's addiction support work whom he suspects has been a victim of human trafficking. However, the caller is not sure, and says that he knows nothing about human trafficking. He would like to talk to an employee of the Assistance system about whether the man could be a victim of human trafficking and what should be done if that is the case.

It transpires over the course of the conversation that the young man encountered by the caller may indeed have been forced into criminal activity. That counts as human trafficking, and the man is entitled to assistance.

The caller is told to talk to the man about whether he would like to become a client of the assistance system. However, the caller must ensure that he does not put his own or the man's safety in danger. The hotline operator explains that the man can also call the assistance system himself and discuss his case without disclosing his name. The call would not commit him to anything.

## TUESDAY

**8.30 am.** A journalist from a local newspaper calls and wants to know how many clients from a specific country there are in the assistance system. The requested statistics are sent to the caller.

**1.00 pm.** The church's addiction support worker who called the previous day calls again. He is now in a quiet place with his client. The client would like to talk to an employee of the assistance system. The addiction support

worker has promised to stay with his client and support him during the conversation. The telephone is put on speaker so that the client and the church worker can hear the assistance



system's hotline operator. The hotline operator talks with the man and answers his questions. After a one-and-a-half-hour conversation, the man decides to become a client of the assistance system. The assistance system begins to gather information about the man's housing situation and access to health care services.

## WEDNESDAY

**3.43 pm.** A call comes into the information hotline from the ground floor of the Joutseno Reception Centre. Four clients of the Assistance system are housed in Joutseno, one of whom has just found out about the death of her sister. The sister has died in a traffic accident in Benin City, Nigeria.

The hotline operator alerts a social instructor who rushes downstairs to see the client. The client is lying on the floor and screaming, and it appears impossible to get through to her.

The social instructor knows that the client is blaming herself for her sister's death: the client believes that the death was caused by a voodoo oath that she has broken by running away from her abusers. The spirits have now avenged her escape by taking her sister's life.

The social instructor and a nurse stay with the client to calm her down. The client is visited at one-hour intervals thereafter, and her condition is also monitored at night. The client is given contact details for a pastor.

## THURSDAY

**8.52 am.** "You... You speak English?" The hotline operator switches to English and asks the caller how she can help him. The caller says in broken English that he needs help. "I work restaurant", he says.

He explains that he cannot take it any longer and that he has no money. The man is crying. The hotline operator tries to get the caller to calm down and checks with him that he is not in a dangerous situation right now. The man is a Russian speaker. The hotline operator tells him that she can get a Russian interpreter and then call him



back if the man would rather speak in his own language. The man asks the operator to call him back at exactly 3.00 pm that same day. The operator promises the man that an employee of the Assistance system will call him at the appointed time.

## FRIDAY

**10.15 am.** A nurse from a reception centre in western Finland calls and explains that she is concerned about a client of the Assistance system who is housed at the centre. The client's support person is a female pensioner.

The client has moved in with the woman and given her a power of attorney to take care of all of her affairs. The client refuses to come to meetings without the support person, and the support person talks more than the client at the meetings and answers questions on the client's behalf. It is difficult to get the client to express her own opinion.

The hotline operator advises the nurse to address the issue directly and to explain that it would be good for the client to learn to take care of her own affairs. As a victim of human

trafficking, she has been in a situation where her ability to make decisions has been taken from her. The current situation may not support her recovery and independence in the best possible way.

An employee of the Assistance system can also discuss the issue with the client and, if necessary, the support person.

It is ultimately up to the client to decide whether she wants to make such extensive use of her support person.

## SATURDAY

**6.20 pm.** A police officer calls the information hotline, which is answered at weekends by the Joutseno Reception Centre's staff. The reception centre forwards urgent calls to an on-call operator, who this time is Director **Jari Kähkönen**.

Kähkönen interrupts his sauna routine (most Finns bathe in a sauna every Saturday) and answers the call. The police officer is dealing with two young women who are suspected of having been forced into prostitution in Finland. The women have no place to live and no food. It is likely that the indivi-

duals who have been exploiting the women are looking for them. The women are residing in Finland illegally.

Kähkönen makes a couple of quick calls and arranges accommodation for the women in a safe house. The police officer takes the women to the safe house, where they are looked after by members of staff 24 hours a day. The staff of the assistance system begin to deal with the women's case first thing on Monday.



THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM'S  
INFORMATION HOTLINE

+358 (0)29 546 3177

24/7

# IHME-PROJECT

## – MAKING MIRACLES

THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS OF THE IHME PROJECT IN 2018 WERE THE UPDATING OF THE IHMISKAUPPA.FI WEBSITE AND COMPREHENSIVE NATIONWIDE TRAINING COURSES RUN FOR PRE-TRIAL INVESTIGATION AUTHORITIES. IHME IN FINNISH MEANS A MIRACLE.

The IHME project, which is coordinated by the Assistance system for victims of human trafficking, has now been running for approximately 1.5 years. Although the project is inescapably nearing its end (31 May 2019), it has produced significant results – and more will materialise until its final moments.

The new ihmiskauppa.fi website went live in June 2018, and it has already attracted plenty of positive feedback concerning its clarity and comprehensive content. The ihmiskauppa.fi website is the most extensive portal dealing with human trafficking and efforts to combat the phenomenon in Finland. The development of the website continues, and plans for the year 2019 include, among other improvements, adding a new section to the website in order to make resources related to the combatting of human trafficking even more easily accessible. A questionnaire on the user-friendliness of the website will also be drawn up in order to gauge future development needs.

### Human trafficking training completed by 750 pre-trial investigation officers

The original plans for the IHME project included training approximately 200–300 pre-trial investigation officers around Finland. After a six-month tour of training events, almost 750 police officers and border control officers have completed the training. The figure is almost three times the original target. The number will increase further, as

more training events will be organised in 2019.

The training for pre-trial investigation authorities focuses on human trafficking as a phenomenon, identifying cases, dealing with victims of human trafficking, the co-operation between the organisations involved in combatting human trafficking, the in-

### “The trainer’s moustache and socks have received positive feedback”

vestigation of cases of human trafficking, and the special characteristics of these cases. Training courses related to pre-trial investigation are run by experts from the Police and the Border Guard who talk about trafficking investigations which they have been involved with themselves.

The feedback received on the training has been encouraging. Based on the feedback, participants have found the training extremely useful, interesting, easy to understand, and practical, which was also the aim. Other aspects praised in feedback forms have included the training resources, the trainer’s socks, moustache and attitude. One feedback form was adorned with multiple hearts, which the trainer took as a sign of either the trainer or the course having made a profound impact on at least one participant.

### Focus to shift to child trafficking

One of the key goals during Spring 2019 is to encourage public debate on human trafficking in children. To promote this aim, the Assistance system has drawn up a report on the status of child trafficking in Finland together with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, which is affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI). The report will be published in March 2019.

Based on the statistics of the Assistance system alone, it is clear that child trafficking and the exploitation of children also occur in Finland – and even Finnish children are not safe from various forms of exploitation. Exploitation can start with small things and evolve over time into activities that increasingly resemble the Criminal Code’s definition of human trafficking.

The question is how much we in Finland can do to prevent the exploitation of children and thereby human trafficking as well. This and other issues related to the topic will undoubtedly be discussed further during the spring.

### Feedback on the project

If you would like to give us feedback on the results of the IHME project, please contact Project Manager Veikko Mäkelä (veikko.makela@migri.fi).



**INTERNAL SECURITY FUND (ISF-P)**  
- POLICE COOPERATION, PREVENTING AND COMBATING CRIME, AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Supported by the European Union



# CLIENT NUMBERS RISING AT A RECORD PACE

A TOTAL OF 163 NEW CLIENTS WERE ACCEPTED INTO THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM IN 2018. THE FIGURE IS CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN DURING PREVIOUS YEARS. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM THE SYSTEM HAS ALSO GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY. ASSISTANCE WAS BEING PROVIDED TO 455 INDIVIDUALS AT THE END OF 2018.

A TOTAL OF 45 PER CENT OF NEW CLIENTS HAD BEEN VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CONFLICT ZONES. A RECORD NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF THE SEX TRADE ALSO SOUGHT HELP FROM THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM IN 2018. THE BIGGEST GROUP AMONG THE NEW CLIENTS CONSISTED OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING INVOLVING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, 18 OF THEM IN FINLAND.

## 163 NEW CLIENTS OF WHOM 10 WERE UNDERAGE

The Assistance system accepted 163 new clients in 2018. The figure is considerably higher than during previous years. The average number of clients accepted into the Assistance system per year in 2017 and 2016 was 130. Prior to this, the annual number of new clients was approximately 50. Compared to the year 2015, for example, the annual number of new clients has therefore more than tripled.

The high number of clients is partly due to the surge in immigration in 2015 and the associated conflicts in continental Asia as well as North and East Africa. Of the new clients, 45% had been victims of human trafficking in conflict zones, especially in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Somalia.

They had been exploited through sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced labour, and forced marriage, especially in the case of minors as well as the recruitment of children into the military.

However, the recent surge in immigration is not enough on its own to explain the rise in numbers, as there are still many individuals among those seeking assistance who are not asylum seekers.

Increasing awareness of human

trafficking has played a big role. People have learned to identify more forms of human trafficking, and the phenomenon has become increasingly better known in Finland.

### 52 exploited in Finland

A total of 52 victims of human trafficking who were exploited in Finland were referred to the Assistance system in 2018.

These individuals include Finnish citizens, EU nationals, individuals who do not require a visa to enter Finland, third-country nationals with a work permit in Finland, and asylum seekers.

The majority of the individuals who had been victims of human trafficking in Finland had been victims of the sex trafficking, usually forced prostitution. Human trafficking for labour exploitation was found to be especially rampant in the restaurant and cleaning industries.

A total of 10 individuals had been victims of human trafficking for marriage either in Finland or so that their exploitation, though originating elsewhere, had continued in Finland.

New clients of the Assistance system

who had been victims of human trafficking in Finland numbered 43 in 2016 and 50 in 2017. Only a few individuals who had been victims of human trafficking in Finland were identified annually in 2015 and in previous years.

### High numbers of exploited minors

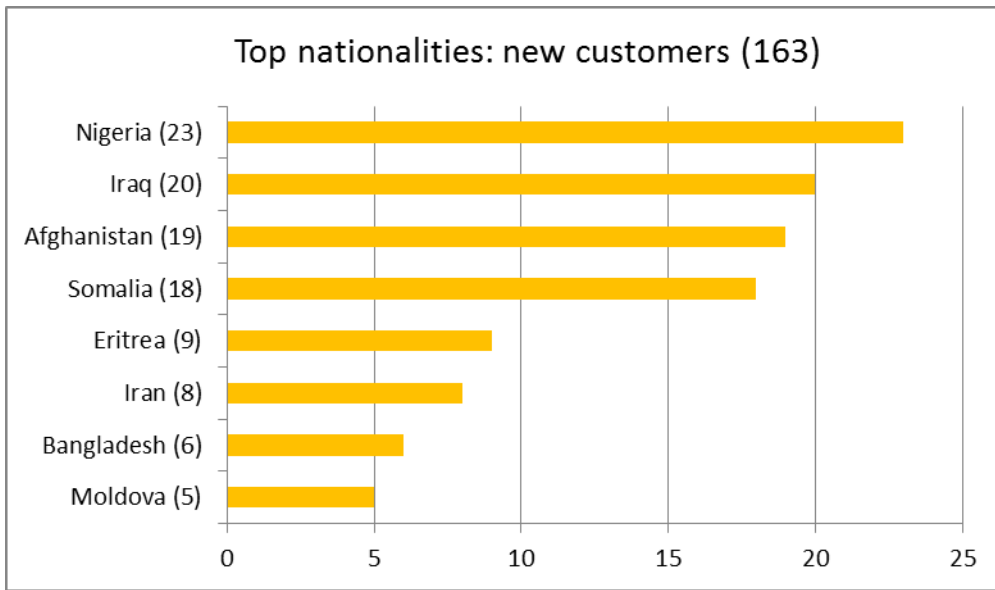
A total of 10 of the new clients accepted into the Assistance system in 2018 were underage persons who were believed to have been victims of human trafficking. Nine of the minors had been exploited in conflict zones.

Many of the young adults who were accepted as clients had also been victims of human trafficking while underage, but had only started to talk about their experiences after coming of age. In other words, the Assistance system has more clients who were exploited while underage than what the statistics suggest. The majority of these individuals had also been exploited in conflict zones.

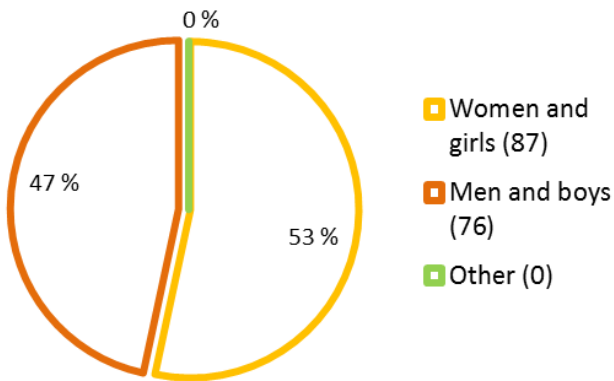
Trafficking in children in conflict zones typically involves sexual slavery, child marriage and exploitative child labour.



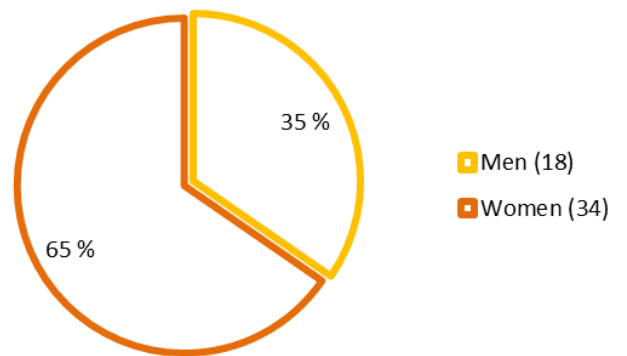
# NEW CLIENTS AS STATISTICS BETWEEN 1 JAN. AND 31 DEC. 2018



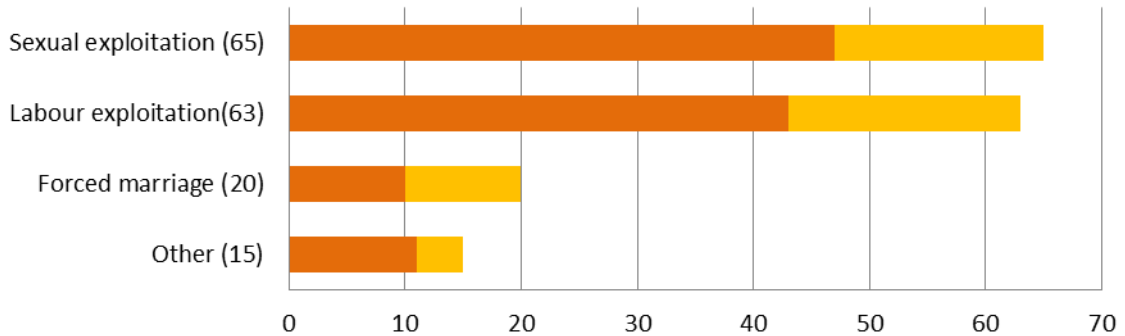
Gender distribution: new customers (163)



Exploited in Finland: new customers (52)

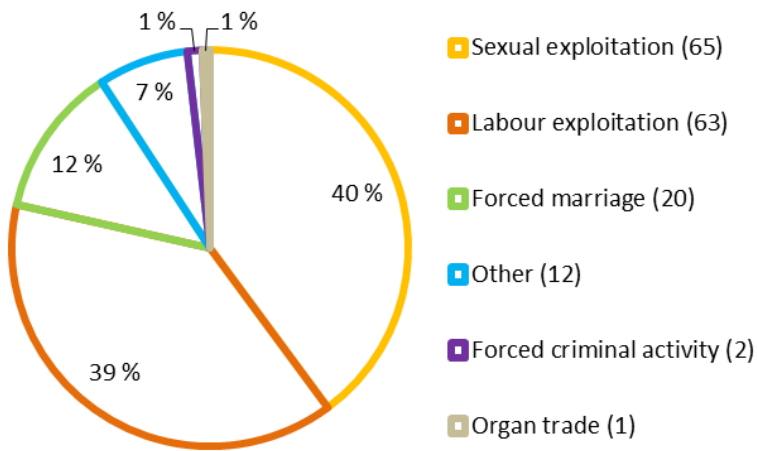


New customers (163) according to place and form of exploitation

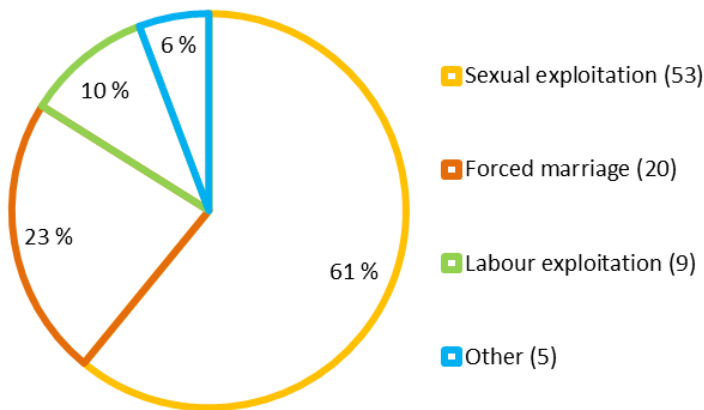


	Other (15)	Forced marriage (20)	Labour exploitation(63)	Sexual exploitation (65)
Abroad	11	10	43	47
in Finland	4	10	20	18

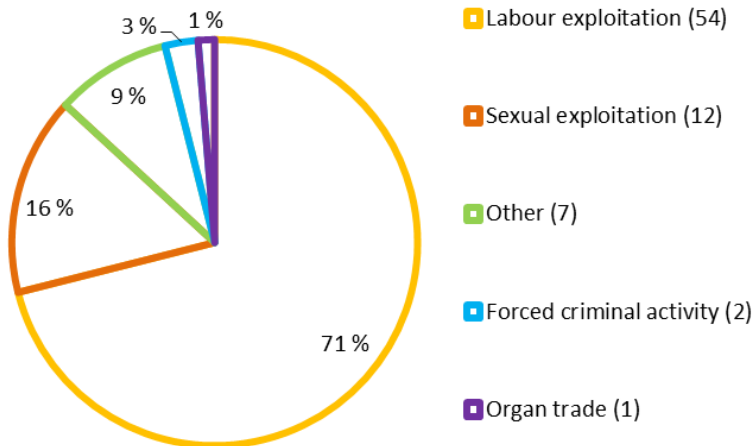
Form of exploitation: new customers (163)



Form of exploitation: women and girls (87)



Form of exploitation: men and boys (76)



Sex trade in Finland

A considerably higher number of individuals who had been victims of the sex trade in Finland were identified in 2018 than during previous years. Their number among the Assistance system’s new clients was 18 in 2018, eight in 2017 and just four in 2016.

However, fewer individuals who had been victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation in Finland were referred to the Assistance system in 2018 than during the two previous years. Their total numbers among the Assistance system’s new clients were 20 in 2018, 33 in 2017 and 37 in total in 2016.

The higher figures of the earlier years were mostly due to larger groups of people seeking assistance simultaneously. For example, the high figure in 2016 can be explained by a group of 24 berry pickers from Thailand who became clients of the Assistance system in the autumn of that year.

Exploitation of Nigerian nationals still widespread

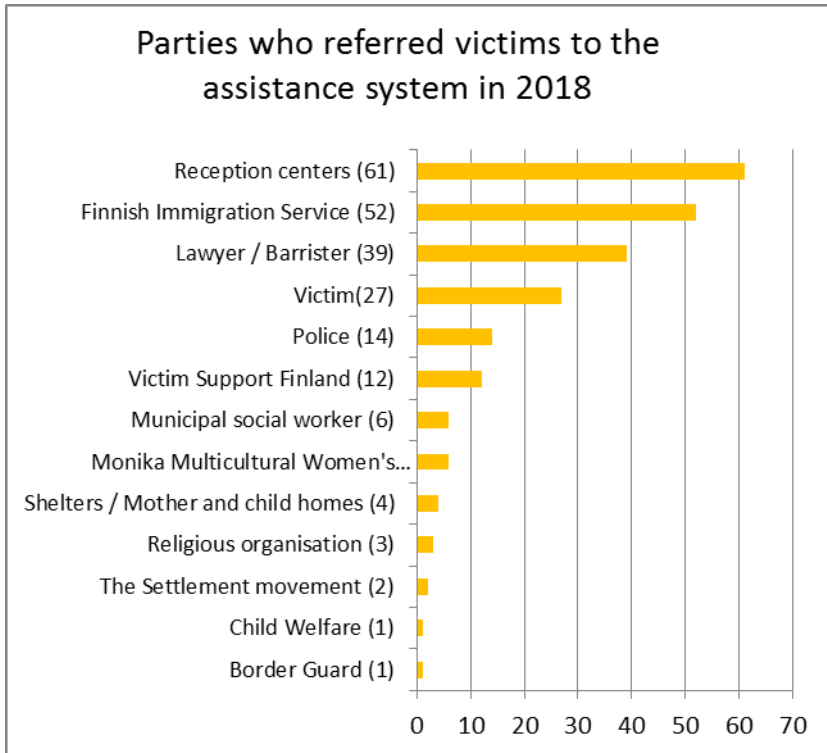
The most common form of exploitation among all new clients was sex trafficking. The majority of victims of sex trafficking were women, while victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation were usually men. Underage boys were more likely to become victims of sexual exploitation than underage girls.

The statistics show that the sexual exploitation of Nigerian women is still unfortunately widespread in European countries.

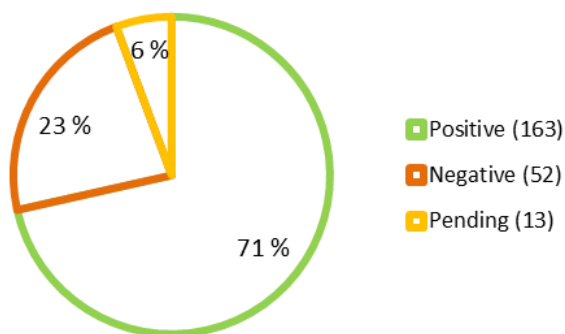
Clients classified as “other” include, for example, cases where the exploitative objective of the trafficking crime has not been established or was not achieved. The category also includes victims of domestic slavery and individuals who have been sold by one slave owner to another in Libya, for example.

In terms of residence status, the majority (125, i.e. 77%) of the new clients accepted into the assistance system in 2018 were asylum seekers.

## THEY REFERRED VICTIMS TO THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM



### Decisions on referrals (228)



### Just over one in five applicants rejected

Of the individuals referred to the Assistance system in 2018, a total of 52 were refused. The most common reason for rejecting applicants was that they were not deemed to need assistance from the Assistance system. In many cases, this became evident during discussions with the individual. Individuals who are refused are told that they can seek assistance again if they still feel that they need it.

The Assistance system found that 18 cases did not involve human trafficking but potentially some other kind of violation of the individual's rights. In 10 cases, the Assistance system concluded that the individual's story was not credible and that they may have been trying to take advantage of the system. Three applicants withdrew their consent for becoming clients of the Assistance system after finding out that the system would require notifying the police of their client status (see page 13 - this notification is no longer made since November 2018).

### More and more victims seek assistance by themselves

The number of individuals who sought assistance from the system by themselves or with the help of a volunteer support person rose in 2018. Individuals who sought assistance by themselves numbered 10 during the first half of the year and as many as 17 during the second half of the year. The launching of the updated ihmiskauppa.fi website can be deemed to have boosted the figure. Contacting the Assistance system via the website is now easier.

### Lawyers still playing an important role

Attorneys and lawyers have played an important role in identifying potential victims of human trafficking and referring them to the Assistance system since the beginning of 2018. They identified cases involving exploitation both in Finland and abroad. Victims residing in Finland may seek out a lawyer's office in their search for help. It is therefore important for lawyers to know how to refer these kinds of victims to the Assistance system.

The Finnish Immigration Service and reception centres again referred numerous potential clients to the Assistance system in 2018. This is primarily due to two reasons: the fact that these organisations are the most likely to encounter individuals who are seeking protection in Finland in circumstances that allow these individuals to tell their story, and the fact that a lot of work has been done in past years to increase these organisations' awareness of human trafficking.

The police and organisations such as Victim Support Finland and Monika – Multicultural Women's Association also referred a considerable number of potential victims of human trafficking to the assistance system.

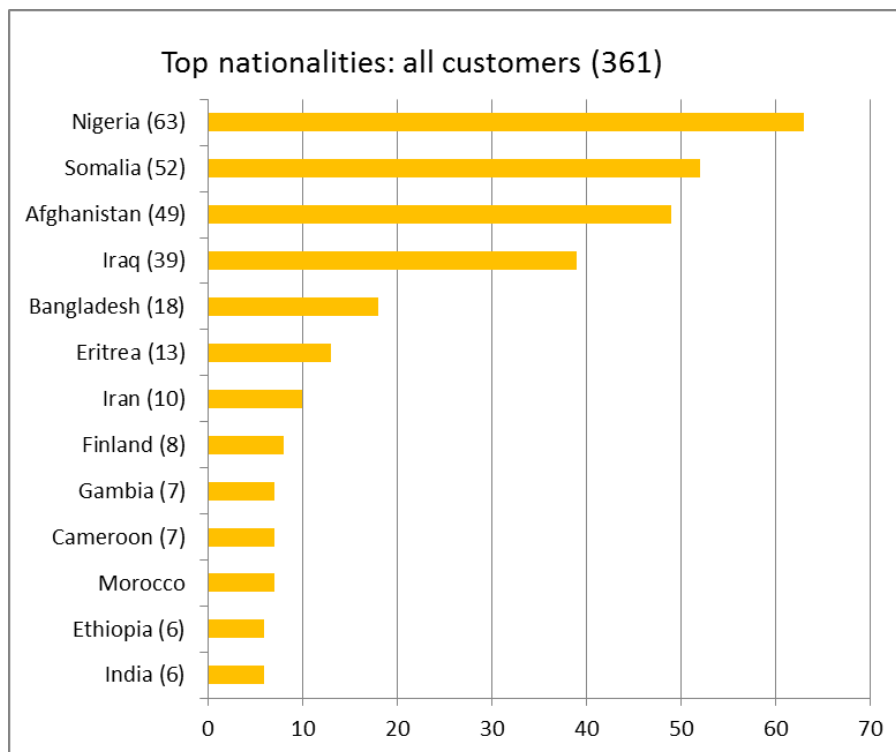
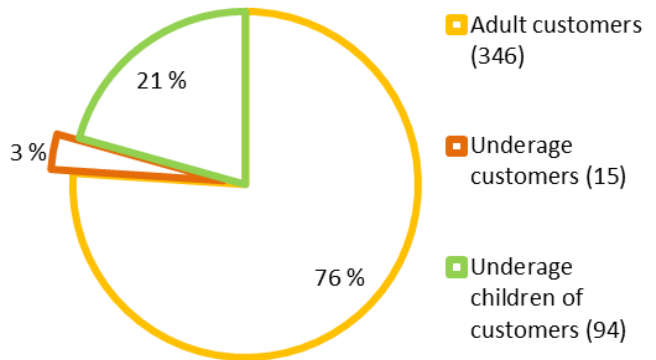
## ALL CLIENTS ON 31 DEC. 2018 – ANOTHER RECORD NUMBER

On 31 December 2019 the Assistance system had 361 clients, who have 94 underage children between them. The system therefore provides assistance to a total of 455 individuals.

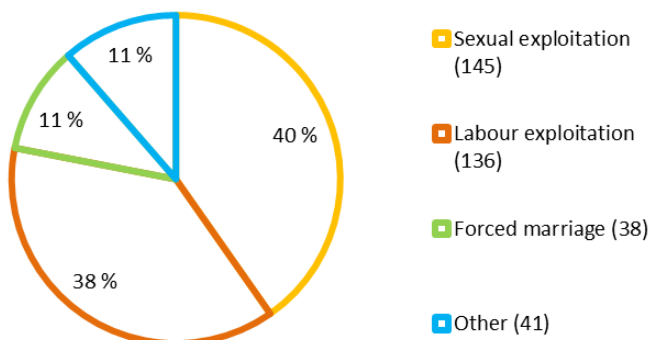
Of the current clients, 41 were underage when they were accepted into the Assistance system and 15 are still minors.

There are 53 different nationalities among the clients. The largest single nationality group is Nigerians, the majority of whom are women. The most common reason for Nigerian nationals to be in the system is their having been forced into prostitution in the EU, some also in Finland.

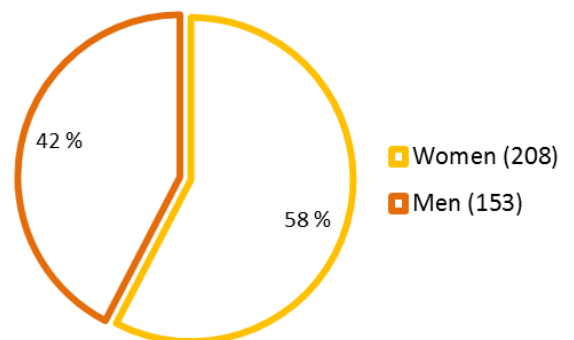
### People within the scope of the Assistance system's services on 31 December 2018 (A total of 455 persons)



### Form of exploitation: all customers (361)



### Gender distribution: all customers (361)



## OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Assistance system managed to evaluate 18 of its clients cases in 2018 with a view to identifying them officially as victims of human trafficking. Of these clients, 14 were officially identified and two were not. The remaining two cases are still pending, as further enquiries are needed before a decision can be made.

Individuals who are accepted as clients of the Assistance system are initially classified as *potential* victims of human trafficking. Once in the system, clients can be officially identified as victims of human trafficking. Victims of human trafficking can be officially identified by the pre-trial investigation authorities, the Finnish Immigration Service, or the Assistance system. The Assistance system mostly deals with the official identification of those who have been victims of human trafficking abroad.

Prior to making a decision on the official identification of a client as a victim of human trafficking, the Assistance system consults a multidisciplinary group of experts consist-

ing of representatives of social services, child welfare services and health care services, the Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Border Guard, Finnish Immigration Service and Joutseno Reception Centre. The members of the group of experts are held accountable as public officials and perform their role alongside their normal duties.

Officially identified victims of human trafficking can remain clients of the Assistance system until they no longer need assistance. Individuals who cannot be officially identified as victims of human trafficking lose their eligibility for assistance from the system.

Due to the limited resources of both the assistance system and the group of experts, it has not been possible for the official identification process to keep pace with the number of clients. This is why the assistance system had as many as 49 clients still awaiting official identification on 31 December 2018.

## REFLECTION AND RECOVERY PERIODS GRANTED

### Reflection periods

The Assistance system granted a reflection period to 12 of its clients in 2018. The length of the reflection periods varied between two and six months.

Reflection periods can be granted to individuals who are residing in Finland illegally. The maximum length of a reflection period is six months, and the individual has a legal right to remain in Finland for that period of time.

The reflection period is designed to give victims time to recover from their experiences and decide whether they want to co-operate with the pre-trial investigation authorities in order to resolve the trafficking crime committed against them. These individuals remain clients of the Assistance system even after the reflection period, regardless of whether or not they have decided to co-operate with the pre-trial investigation authorities.

The police are always notified when a client is granted a reflection period, in order to ensure that the appropriate authorities are aware of the client's legal right to stay in Finland. However, other details of the client are not disclosed automatically. The pre-trial investigation authorities cannot question the victim during the reflection period unless it is absolutely necessary.

During the reflection period victims can apply for legal

residency or decide to return to their home country. Those who decide to return to their home country are eligible for the assisted voluntary return programme.

### Recovery periods

Recovery periods can be granted to victims of human trafficking who are residing in Finland legally, including Finnish citizens. During the recovery period, the pre-trial investigative authorities are forbidden from interrogating the victim and no information of the victim is given to pre-trial investigative authorities.

The initial recovery period is 30 days, after which more time can be given up to a maximum of 90 days.

The Assistance system granted a recovery period to a total of 36 of its clients in 2018.

No recovery periods have been granted after November 2018, which was when the Assistance system adopted a new policy according to which it has neither a responsibility nor the right to automatically notify the police of its clients. Recovery periods are therefore deemed to have become obsolete. However, there is nothing stopping the Assistance system from also granting recovery periods in the future.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE IHMISKAUPPA.FI**



# NO MORE AUTOMATIC NOTIFICATION OF THE POLICE

THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM ADOPTED A NEW POLICY IN NOVEMBER 2018, ACCORDING TO WHICH IT NO LONGER NOTIFIES THE POLICE OF NEW CLIENTS ACCEPTED INTO THE SYSTEM.

Since November 2018, it has been possible for individuals to become clients of the Assistance system without the police being notified. Being eligible for assistance also does not require the victim to file a police report themselves.

The Assistance system for victims of human trafficking originally interpreted a legislative reform that entered into force in July 2015 as meaning that the police had to be notified of all clients accepted into the Assistance system. However, the Assistance system has since concluded that the law can and should in fact be interpreted as meaning that the Assistance system has neither a responsibility nor the right to notify the police of its clients.

## Lowering the threshold for frightened victims

The fact that the Assistance system no longer automatically notifies the police of new clients may lower the threshold for frightened victims in particular to come forward. By September 2018, the NGOs that help victims of human

trafficking in Finland had identified 20 potential victims of human trafficking in 2018 who had not wanted to be referred to the Assistance system.

These individuals' biggest reason for declining assistance from the authorities was the fact that the Assistance system had notified the police of its previous clients.

The Assistance system's staff have also come across potential victims of human trafficking for whom the Assistance system's duty to notify the police has been a deterrent to seeking assistance. Three individuals who sought help from the Assistance system in 2018 withdrew their applications after finding out that the police would be notified of their being clients.

## Will crimes go uncovered?

Some authorities have been concerned about the police's not finding out about serious crimes without notifications from the Assistance system. However, the Assistance system has come to the conclusion that frightened

victims of human trafficking and the associated crimes would never have come to the police's attention otherwise either. Being a client of the Assistance system can potentially help at least some victims of this kind to feel secure and safe enough to file a report with the police.

As the eligibility of individuals to remain clients of the Assistance system is, by law, partially dependent on criminal procedure, it is nevertheless possible that not filing a police report can, in some cases, affect the continuance of assistance given to certain clients.

The Assistance system encourages its clients to go to the police and protects its clients together with the police in the event that filing a police report puts their safety in jeopardy.

## The police now only notified of serious threats

In the event of a serious threat to the safety of a victim, their loved ones, other individuals involved or the staff

assisting the victim, the Assistance system still has a duty to provide the police with any information needed to protect the victim and other individuals and to assess the threat. The police have a duty and the competence to assess the seriousness of the threat and try to defuse it. The Assistance system is responsible for ensuring the safety of its clients in co-operation with the police.

### Update your referral forms!

Potential victims of human trafficking can be referred to the Assistance system by filing a referral form. The forms have been updated by, for example, rewording the section concerning notifications to the police.

The new forms can be downloaded from the ihmiskauppa.fi website. Using the forms is not compulsory, but it

makes referrals easier to process. Potential victims of human trafficking can also personally seek assistance by contacting the Assistance system directly.

The operation of the Assistance system is based on Section 4 of the Finnish Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

## PERSONNEL OF THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

The Assistance system employs three professionals of social services and four Senior Advisers. The Assistance system's social instructors are based at the Joutseno Reception Centre and Oulu Reception Centre. A social worker joined the team on 1 June 2018, and is based in Helsinki. The social worker assists the social instructors in dealing with the Assistance system's clients. The Senior Advisers have offices in both Helsinki and Joutseno.

A university student worked as a trainee in the Assistance system's administration in the summer of 2018.

The Senior Advisers as well as the social services profes-

sionals travel all over Finland to attend to clients' affairs, provide training and take part in various networking events and seminars, where they give speeches and discuss phenomena and issues related to human trafficking.

The Director of the Joutseno Reception Centre and the nurse who looks after the Assistance system's clients and acts as the system's medical consultant also make an important contribution to the work of the assistance system. The Project Manager in charge of the IHME project is also a member of the Assistance system's team.

## POSTERS AND FLYERS STILL AVAILABLE FREE-OF-CHARGE

Authorities, associations and other organisations can still order posters and flyers related to the See the Invisible campaign free-of-charge. The posters and flyers are designed for the authorities, organisations and other parties who may encounter victims of human trafficking through their work.

The posters urge the viewer to look out for victims of human trafficking who may be hiding in plain sight among us. The posters also include the address of the ihmiskauppa.fi website where more information is available. In addition to the posters, there are flyers that provide a concise, step-by-step guide on how to approach victims of human trafficking and refer them to the Assistance system.

Orders for the posters and flyers can be placed by emailing ihmiskauppa.auttamisjarjestelma@migri.fi, or by calling the Assistance system's information hotline on +358 (0)29 546 3177.





## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information,  
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ME project, please contact:

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### NOTICE ABOUT THE STATISTICS IN THIS PUBLICATION

The Assistance system for victims of human trafficking collects statistics on individuals who have been referred to the system and on individuals who have been accepted as clients. The Assistance system is a public authority mandated to help victims of human trafficking, their underage children, and any persons assisting in the investigation of the trafficking crime.

The Assistance system has a low threshold for accepting clients, and being a client of the Assistance system does not mean that a court of law has formally declared the individual to have been a victim of human trafficking within the meaning of the Criminal Code of Finland. The Assistance system uses the term 'victim of human trafficking' for its clients in this publication, even when the individual is only a *potential* victim of human trafficking.